

The hospital also has a newly enlarged emergency room which is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Each month about 385 individuals utilize this emergency room.

Nor-Lea was recognized as a top performing "Small Community Hospital" because of their higher survival rate and because they spend less money, release patients from the hospital faster, and have fewer employees. In short, Nor-Lea treats more of the sickest patients, while maintaining high customer service and preserving profits in a difficult marketplace.

Congratulations, Nor-Lea General Hospital. I hope that your success will be a catalyst for continuous hospital performance improvement.●

#### HONORING LINDA BARKER

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I wish to publicly commend Linda Barker, a resident of Sioux Falls, SD, on her selection as the recipient of the Sioux Falls Development Foundation's annual Spirit of Sioux Falls Award.

The Spirit of Sioux Falls Award is given annually in memory of the eight people who were killed when then South Dakota Gov. George Mickelson's plane crashed in 1993. This year, the recipient was Linda Barker, a member of the community who has shown leadership and commitment to the economic development in Sioux Falls. Dan Scott, President of the Sioux Falls Development Foundation, said that Linda, who is currently a member of the Board of Directors for the Development Foundation, was chosen because she "has been an incredibly valuable member of the Board of Directors. Not just because she has attended the meetings, but because she has been in our office on a weekly basis offering any kind of help the staff needed."

During her service with the South Dakota Development Foundation, she was instrumental in a number of ways. In addition to her work with the Forward Sioux Falls program, her leadership helped the Development Foundation acquire enough land to serve as development parks for the next fifteen years. According to Mr. Scott, they are now well prepared to handle the needs in the development park arena for the future. She was also instrumental in serving as chairman of the membership committee—essentially revitalizing and reenergizing their membership effort, raising the number from 350 to 400 members.

Linda's involvement in the Sioux Falls area comes from her love of the community. In her thirteen years as part owner of Business Aviation Services in Sioux Falls, she was instrumental in helping the company more than quadruple its business, increasing sales from \$4 million to \$18 million annually. The company has also added 100 employees and it now owns or manages 48 aircraft, compared with six in 1990, when Linda joined the ownership team. Dale Froehlich, president and chief ex-

ecutive officer of Business Aviation, said Linda's success is "because of her unwillingness to give up, even in the dreariest of situations." It is this type of hard work and dedication that led Linda to her success and her subsequent recognition with the Spirit of Sioux Falls Award.

This prestigious award is a reflection of her extraordinary leadership, skill and commitment to South Dakota. I am pleased that her success is being publicly recognized, and I am confident that her achievements will serve as an exemplary model for talented South Dakotans throughout our state. People of all ages need to think more about how we, as individual citizens, can work together at the local level to ensure the health and vitality of our towns and neighborhoods. Citizens such as Linda Barker are examples to all of us. She is an extraordinary individual who richly deserves this distinguished recognition. I strongly commend her hard work and dedication, and I am very pleased that her efforts are being publicly honored and celebrated.

It is with great honor that I share her impressive accomplishments with my colleagues.●

#### IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE REVEREND DR. AVERY ALDRIDGE

● Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I want to call my colleagues' attention to the loss of one of the most influential civic and religious leaders in Flint, MI, Dr. Avery Aldridge, who passed away at the age of 78 on November 1, 2003. He is greatly mourned by his wife and family, his church community, and people in my home State of Michigan who knew and loved him as a man of great faith, devoted to his family, and a voice for justice and equality in the African American community.

Dr. Aldridge was born in Widener, AR on February 9, 1925, the fourth of nine children. He completed his secondary education in Memphis, TN, and from there was inducted in the Army in 1943. He served as a Sergeant during World War II, defending the cause of freedom for his country until his honorable discharge in 1946. He then settled in Flint, MI where he married Mildred Light and had two children, Karen and Derrick. Dr. Aldridge and his wife were dedicated members of Antioch Baptist Church where he served as General Superintendent of the Sunday School and was later ordained into the ministry.

In December, 1956, Dr. Aldridge founded Foss Avenue Missionary Baptist Church with his wife, Mildred, and two others. The church has grown through the years to a congregation of two thousand families, with 50 auxiliaries and committees, an elementary and secondary school, a credit union, an activity center and a free clothing center. Dr. Aldridge also led Foss Avenue to initiate a small business center to train youth for employment, provide food baskets to those in need, organize a prison ministry and annually provide

Thanksgiving Day dinner to all incarcerated in the Genesee County Jail. Dr. Aldridge's vision and leadership also supported four missionaries to Africa, and led to the founding of Concerned Pastors for Social Action (CPSA), the CPSA Courier, a weekly community and religious publication, and Faith Access to Community Economic Development (FACED), a community development organization.

Dr. Aldridge was a lifelong learner and furthered his education at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and the University of Michigan-Flint. He believed strongly in the value of education and supported black colleges across the country, as well as scholarships for local youth. Because of his work, he was awarded several honorary degrees through the years.

Dr. Avery was committed to serving the needs of people and improving the quality of community life. He rose to prominence in Flint during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and was a calming influence in the city during tensions in the wake of the Detroit riots in 1967. He became known as "The Rights Activist," serving on local, State, and national commissions, including the Flint Human Relations Commission, the Flint Housing Commission, the Michigan AIDS Policy Commission, and the National Holiday for Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission.

I know my colleagues join me in paying tribute to the life and ministry of Reverend Dr. Avery Aldridge who will be missed by the many people whose lives he touched. I hope his family takes comfort in knowing that his legacy will stand as an inspiration for generations to come.●

#### PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR FINALIST

● Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, it is my distinct honor and pleasure to recognize Richard Roberto of John F. Kennedy High School in Paterson, NJ as one of six finalists for the National High School Principal of the Year.

The impact that Mr. Roberto has made on the students and faculty at John F. Kennedy High School cannot be overstated. His leadership has produced remarkable results for students—indeed, test scores are higher at John F. Kennedy, in part, I am sure, because he created an extended year program for juniors and established freshman houses to personalize the learning environment. He also administered the expansion of eight career academies. These academies provide small learning communities in which students can explore diverse interests. As you can see, students have thrived under Mr. Roberto because of his efforts to develop opportunities for their success.

Not only has his work affected students, but his staff development program, which includes a focus on core curriculum content, has fostered collaboration among all the teachers at